

WE CLAIM:

1. An apparatus for metering and dispensing powdered product into containers, comprising a storage chamber (2) for receiving the product,  
an incrementally rotating filler wheel (3) having at least one metering opening (4, 5), the filler wheel (3) in a first position receiving product from the storage chamber (2) and in a second position dispensing the received product to a container, and  
a closure element (6), which is disposed adjacent to the filler wheel (3) and can be connected to the filler wheel (3) in such a way that upon a motion of the filler wheel (3) into its replacement position, the closure element (6) is moved into a position disposed below the storage chamber (2), to prevent the escape of product from the storage chamber (2).
2. The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein the closure element (6), on its side located toward the storage chamber (2), has an outer shape (16) which is embodied to correspond to the outer shape of the filler wheel (3).
3. The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, further comprising spring-loaded sealing elements (8) disposed in sealing fashion between the closure element (6) and the storage chamber (2).
4. The apparatus in accordance with claim 2, further comprising spring-loaded sealing elements (8) disposed in sealing fashion between the closure element (6) and the storage chamber (2).
5. The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, further comprising a drive mechanism, for moving the filler wheel (3) and the closure element (6) connected to it from an

operating position of the filler wheel (3) into the replacement position of the filler wheel (3).

6. The apparatus in accordance with claim 2, further comprising a drive mechanism, for moving the filler wheel (3) and the closure element (6) connected to it from an operating position of the filler wheel (3) into the replacement position of the filler wheel (3).

7. The apparatus in accordance with claim 3, further comprising a drive mechanism, for moving the filler wheel (3) and the closure element (6) connected to it from an operating position of the filler wheel (3) into the replacement position of the filler wheel (3).

8. The apparatus in accordance with claim 4, further comprising a drive mechanism, for moving the filler wheel (3) and the closure element (6) connected to it from an operating position of the filler wheel (3) into the replacement position of the filler wheel (3).

9. The apparatus in accordance with claim 5, wherein the drive mechanism is embodied as a pneumatic drive mechanism (7).

10. The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, further comprising a changing implement (13) and means for securing the changing implement to the filler wheel (3).

11. The apparatus in accordance with claim 2, further comprising a changing implement (13) and means for securing the changing implement to the filler wheel (3).

12. The apparatus in accordance with claim 3, further comprising a changing implement (13) and means for securing the changing implement to the filler wheel (3).

13. The apparatus in accordance with claim 5, further comprising a changing implement (13) and means for securing the changing implement to the filler wheel (3).

14. The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein the filler wheel (3) can be connected to the closure element (6) by means of a screw connection and/or a clamping connection (17).

15. The apparatus in accordance with claim 2, wherein the filler wheel (3) can be connected to the closure element (6) by means of a screw connection and/or a clamping connection (17).

16. The apparatus in accordance with claim 3, wherein the filler wheel (3) can be connected to the closure element (6) by means of a screw connection and/or a clamping connection (17).

17. The apparatus in accordance with claim 10, wherein the filler wheel (3) can be connected to the closure element (6) by means of a screw connection and/or a clamping connection (17).

18. The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, further comprising a guide element disposed on the closure element (6) for simple installation of the filler wheel (3).

19. A method for replacing a filler wheel (3) in an apparatus (1) for metering and dispensing powdered product into containers, the method comprising the steps of moving the filler wheel (3) from its operating position into a replacement position, and simultaneously moving a closure element (6) connected to the filler wheel (3) into the original operating position of the filler wheel (3) in order to close an outlet (9) from a storage chamber (2) for the product, and releasing the filler wheel (3) from the closure element (6) to enable a replacement of the filler wheel (3).

20. The method in accordance with claim 19, wherein the change in the position of the filler wheel (3) from its operating position to its replacement position is effected by means of a drive mechanism, in particular a pneumatic drive mechanism (7).